



BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES
OFFICE OF RETIREMENT

STANDARDS FOR CAREER RECOGNITION UPON RETIREMENT

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Each year, the Department of State retires about 600 Foreign Service and Civil Service Department employees. Each day, new employees join the 48,000-member staff of the Department. Since September 15, 1789, it is this constant flow of talent that is the substance and history of our institution.

Retirement is a milestone not only in an employee's career, but also in one's life. It marks the completion of another building block in the rich history of the Department of State. As such, departure from active duty with the Department of State deserves to be dignified with recognition for the accomplishments realized and years of service rendered by employees of the Foreign Service, Civil Service and Locally Employed Staff,

often in dangerous, unhealthful and isolated locations around the globe.

As the oldest Executive Branch, Cabinet-level agency, we are, in the aggregate, no more than the contributions each employee makes on a daily basis to achieving the Department's mission:

"Our mission is to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American People and the international community."

Department of State Strategic Plan 2004

This guidebook describes the process and procedures that Bureaus, Offices, Embassies and Missions should follow to ensure a standardized, appropriate and dignified departure for all retiring Department of State employees.

The following guidelines are intended to improve planning for retirement ceremonies so that employees are accorded the recognition their dedication and professionalism deserve. Implementation of a more uniform awards process requires the commitment of managers, advance planning and consideration for employees' individual preferences.

"The 1789 Ceremony"

On September 15, 1789, Congress passed "An Act to provide for the safe keeping of the Acts, Records, and Seal of the United States, and for other purposes." This law changed the name of the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of State because certain domestic duties were assigned to the agency.

There shall be at the seat of government an executive department to be known as the "Department of State," and a Secretary of State, who shall be the head thereof.

TITLE 22. FOREIGN RELATIONS AND INTERCOURSE

CHAPTER 38. DEPARTMENT OF STATE § 2651. Establishment of Department

The expression of gratitude of the Department as an institution begins with a retirement ceremony that recognizes each employee's place in the ongoing history of the Department. To commemorate this addition to our history, all of us need to gather together for an appropriate act of recognition, a "1789 Ceremony," to pay tribute to our retiring colleagues.

As an institution, the Department strives to ensure uniform retirement recognition to all employees throughout the Department. Managers throughout the Department, both domestically and overseas, are responsible for ensuring and carrying out the ceremonies recognizing retiring colleagues.

Each supervisor is responsible for ensuring the convening of the “1789 Ceremony” and for conducting it. Each retiring employee must be so honored. The format should be appropriate to and reflect the desires of the departing employee.

The format and size of the ceremony may be tailored to individual preferences. It may be, but does not necessarily have to be a formal, stand-up presentation. There are many suitable formats appropriate to the employee:

- A “historical” de-briefing conversation with fellow employees is one way to conduct the event and to pass on a legacy.
- A recitation of accomplishments by recollections of colleagues is another way to bring the past forward
- Other formats and ideas as are appropriate to the occasion

Managers should initiate discussions with employees regarding their preferences as soon as an employee has announced his or her intention to retire. Ceremonies may be held in conference rooms in the official workplace or, if held in the Department, either in the Delegates Lounge or for multiple retirements, the diplomatic reception area on the eighth floor. Retiring employees should be given the opportunity to invite friends and family members to participate in these ceremonies.

Employees retiring overseas should be offered retirement ceremonies similar to those offered in the Harry S Truman building in Washington.

The key point is that the retirement process commences with a recognition event.

- Foreign Service and Civil Service — 25 Years or More of Service
 - The Secretary's Career Achievement Award
 - The Department of State Career Flag Award and Honor Certificate
 - The "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award
- Foreign Service and Civil Service — Less Than 25 Years of Service
 - The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award
 - The "Expanding Universe" Department of State Career Commemoration Award
- Locally Employed Staff
 - The Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award
 - More than 25 years of service — The Secretary's Career Achievement Award

Starting January 15, 2006 the Department launched three recognition packages for retiring employees:

- Foreign Service and Civil Service — 25 Years or More of Service
- Foreign Service and Civil Service — Less Than 25 Years of Service
- Locally Employed Staff

Foreign Service, Civil Service and Locally Employed Staff — 25 Years or More of Service

“The Secretary’s Career Achievement Award” is the centerpiece of the Department’s retirement recognition program for retiring employees with 25 years or more of U.S. Government and/or military service who have performed with dedication and distinction. (3 FAM 4829).

There is no formal nominating or approval process for "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award." Eligible employees (those with 25 years of actual service as verified with HR/RET) are required to submit form DS 5076 with their retirement applications. This form is provided to Bureau awards officers who are responsible for identifying eligible employees, requesting certificates and arranging for their presentation in an appropriate frame.

As of January 15, 2006, U.S. Foreign Service and Civil Service employee recipients of "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award" also receive "The Department of State Career Flag Award and Honor Certificate." This award consists of a 3 x 5 foot flag of the United States that has been flown at the Department in honor of their service. The flag is delivered in a clear lucite display case with an honor certificate explaining the significance of the flag.

In addition, all U.S. Foreign Service and Civil Service employees eligible to retire will receive "The 'Expanding Universe' Department of State Career Commemoration Award." This award consists of a block of crystal with a replica of the Marshall M. Fredericks "Expanding Universe" sculpture laser-etched in the interior. The crystal sculpture is embossed with the Department's seal on the top and engraved with the retiree's name, length of service and date of retirement on the front. The sculpture rests on a base of black marble.

This statue is familiar to any employee who has visited or worked in the Harry S Truman building. It is located in the interior courtyard of the C Street entrance to the Department of State. It is intended to symbolize the "vitality, immensity, order and mystery of the universe."

Locally employed staff recipients of “The Secretary’s Career Achievement Award” are also eligible for “The Ambassador’s Retirement Recognition Award” and other mementos, such as a flag flown at the Embassy, as determined by the Embassy Awards Committee.

Foreign Service and Civil Service — Less Than 25 Years of Service

After January 15, 2006, employees with less than 25 years of service receive a new certificate, “The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award,” presented in an embossed leatherette folder. Until initiation of this program in 2006, employees with less than 25 years of service did not receive any certificate of recognition.

There is no formal nominating or approval process for “The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award.” Eligible employees are required to submit form DS 5079 with their retirement applications. This form is provided to Bureau awards officers who are responsible for identifying eligible employees, requesting the award certificate and arranging for the presentation in the appropriate embossed folder.

This award certificate of recognition has standard language and does not require an individual citation. The name of the retiree and years of service as determined by HR/RET will be entered in the document.

In addition, these retirees will receive “The ‘Expanding Universe’ Department of State Career Commemoration Award.”

Locally Employed Staff

In order to standardize worldwide recognition of our Locally Employed Staff and to ensure that all are appropriately recognized, the Department is establishing "The Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award." This award contains a citation regarding the employee's service to the Embassy and to the United States. It is to be presented by the Embassy to the LES employee in an event appropriate to the retiring employee. The "Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award" may be presented to all retiring Locally Employed Staff with less than 25 years of service who do not receive "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award." The "Ambassador's Retirement Recognition Award" may also be presented to those who receive "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award."

A guidance checklist is available on AskRNet under Retirement Awards.



25 Years of Service



**Less than 25 Years
of Service**

The Ambassador's Retirement Recognition award



Two new forms for retiring U.S. employees are available with the retirement forms on www.RNet.state.gov web site under "Forms." These facilitate delivery and ensure that eligible U.S. employees receive all elements of the retirement recognition packages:

- Form DS 5076 is for retiring employees with 25 or more years of service who are eligible for "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award."
- Form DS 5079 is for "The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award" which will be given to employees with less than 25 years of service.

Employees may print out these forms from www.RNet.state.gov and send them to HR/RET with their retirement applications. They will also be available in the electronic Retirement Application. Form 5076, "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award" requires that employees provide notes to the Bureau awards officer for the citation which is limited to five lines and 50 words. All citations must be approved by S/S. A list of approved citations is available on AskRNet under "Retirement Recognition."

HR/RET is providing bureaus with a monthly list of names of all employees who are retiring. This spreadsheet will be broken down on the basis of years of service: those with more than 25 years service and those with less than 25 years of service; additionally this will include Foreign Service or Civil Service, overseas or domestic service and the current bureau of assignment. HR/RET will notify bureau awards officers and will forward them the DS 5079 and DS 5076 forms. Bureaus are required to confirm the date of delivery of the awards for HR/RET for each recipient on the spreadsheet. If any employee who is eligible for an award declines or does not receive an award, the reasons are to be noted by the bureaus.

Delivery

"The Department of State Career Flag Award and Honor Certificate" and "The 'Expanding Universe' Department of State Career Commemoration Award" will be delivered directly to retiring employees in a box with silver lining at their address of record. Funding for these recognition awards is provided by the Bureau of Human Resources.

Once the bureau identifies award recipients and confirms their names to the Office of Retirement (HR/RET), this office will instruct the contractor to include the items in the retirement package. Many employees retire from overseas or depart the Washington area before the annual retirement ceremony sponsored by the Bureau of Human Resources late in the year. HR/RET has thus made it a practice to send retirees their mementos at their address of record. Bureaus are responsible for initiating, funding, packaging and delivering both the "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award" and "The Department of State Retirement

Recognition Award" to recipients, both domestic and overseas. Bureaus are responsible for delivering "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award" in the appropriate frame designed specifically for the retirement package.

Bureaus may deliver "The Secretary's Career Achievement Award" and "The Department of State Retirement Recognition Award" at the "1789 Ceremony," whether overseas or domestic. Bureaus may present the entire retirement recognition package directly to retirees at Bureau or Embassy ceremonies if HR/RET receives 6 weeks prior notice.

"The De-commissioning Ceremony"

A Department-wide commemorative retirement event is held late each year for employees who have retired that year and is hosted by the Secretary of State. This "De-commissioning Ceremony" is the counterpoint to the "Swearing-In Ceremony" that commenced their careers.

The Bureau of Human Resources organizes this annual collective celebration of individual retirements and retirees are invited to meet with the Secretary, including the opportunity for an individual photograph. A reception in the eighth floor Benjamin Franklin reception area usually follows the event with the Secretary. Approximately half of those who retired during the year normally attend this ceremony, which is one reason the individual "1789 Ceremony" is so important to the retirement process.

“Foreign Affairs Day”

All retirees are invited to participate in Foreign Affairs Day in May every year. Foreign Affairs Day is conducted by the Director General, and the Secretary normally addresses the group. Ceremonies include off-the-record sessions with officers from the Front Offices of regional bureaus that permit participants to ask policy questions and obtain candid answers. The last event of the day is a luncheon in the Benjamin Franklin Room.

Managers also have the option of nominating retirees for the Length of Service Award. The Length of Service Award gives recognition for all creditable service with the U.S. Government including civilian and military service.

Each Chief of Mission is responsible for administering the Length of Service Awards Program, including establishing procedures and making arrangements for presentation. Awards officers assure that the program is administered properly.

Chiefs of Mission are invited to a special flag ceremony presided over by the Director General in the HR Front Office when they retire. Honorees are permitted to invite a small group (up to 20 people including the DG, Ambassador and spouse) of family, friends and colleagues to join the celebration of the leadership they have provided during their careers with the Department of State. Ambassadors are encouraged to invite the Assistant Secretary of their regional bureau or the Deputy Secretary of State to these ceremonies.

Normally, the Ambassador's spouse will receive an American flag and the Ambassador will receive the Ambassadorial flag. If the spouse does not attend, the Ambassador will be presented with both flags. The Director General's assistant will arrange for a photographer to be present to record the event.

The Director General usually makes brief personal remarks on the Ambassador's distinguished career. The Ambassador may also make brief remarks and/or ask an official from the regional bureau to make remarks on his or her behalf. The ceremonies conclude with a champagne toast.

If the ambassador wants to invite more than 20 guests, the Treaty Room or the Delegates Lounge may be reserved for the ceremonies. Arrangements and associated expenses for set-up, clean-up, photographer, podium, etc. are the responsibility of the bureau. It is important to bear in mind that non-State guests must be pre-cleared through security and escorted to the ceremonies.

All arrangements should be coordinated by the Director General's Office Management Specialist (Ext. 7-9898). HR Staffers can provide detailed contact information for reserving facilities and arranging other amenities.

